

# In Washington . . .

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## Future Luciano projects?

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WASHINGTON—(NEA)—The intelligence and investigative services of the federal government:

(a) claim they are dedicated to eliminating the corrupting influence of organized crime in America.

(b) have little compunction about entering into joint ventures with the Mafia when the occasion demands.

Both answers are correct.

Twice in recent years, the public has belatedly learned that federal officials supposedly committed to advancing the cause of justice have enlisted some of the most notorious figures from the world of organized crime as their partners.

The most recent disclosure comes in the form of a newly published book, "The Luciano Project" by Rodney Campbell, a veteran journalist whose startling material comes from the previously secret files of the late Thomas E. Dewey, governor of New York from 1943 to 1955.

Dewey touched off a nationwide controversy in 1946 when he commuted the 30- to 50-year prison sentence of Charles (Lucky) Luciano, one of the country's more infamous Mafia bosses, on the grounds that Luciano had cooperated with military officials during World War II.

The debate over that action had not subsided eight years later, when Dewey sought to resolve the issue by commissioning an official investigation into the Mafia's role in the war effort.

The long-confidential report on that probe forms the basis of Campbell's book, which details a truly bizarre arrangement that existed from 1942 to 1944:

"Up to 73 naval officers and 82 naval enlisted men and civilian agents in the Third Naval District were actively, continuously and effectively engaged in secret intelligence operations that required the complete cooperation of the Mafia and many of its most notorious leaders."

Among the Navy's wartime helpers were Luciano, Meyer (Little Man) Lansky, Joseph (Socks) Lanza and a host of lesser mob figures.

They reported suspicious activities on the New York waterfront, helped to obtain fraudulent credentials for Navy in-

telligence agents working undercover on the docks and provided detailed information about Sicily's harbors and military installations prior to the Allied invasion of that island.

Campbell concluded that "the Navy ought to be proud of what was achieved" but he also found that when faced with the possibility of public disclosure shortly after the end of the war, "the Navy embarked on a deliberate, ruthless and ill-advised coverup of the whole Luciano project."

That story has emerged only a few years after the revelation that the Central Intelligence Agency in late 1960 recruited Sam (Momo) Giancana, Chicago's Mafia boss, and John Roselli, a leading West Coast mob figure, to direct an assassination plot against Cuban Premier Fidel Castro.

Operating out of a posh Miami Beach hotel, those two men were supposed to plan the poisoning of not only Castro but also his brother, Raul, and Cuban

revolutionary leader Che Guevara. They failed in their mission, however.

The problem with such unholy alliances is that they frequently have resulted in unwarranted leniency for the Mafia figures involved. For instance, the Navy sought in vain to help Lanza "beat the rap" after he was convicted on six counts of extortion.

Luciano had his sentence commuted after serving only 10 years in prison, and a Giancana lieutenant once tried to terminate the Federal Bureau of Investigation's tight surveillance of his boss on the grounds that "we're all part of the same team."

Has government-Mafia cooperation been limited to only those two cases? An indirect answer comes from the admiral in charge of the Office of Naval Intelligence who successfully thwarted public disclosure of the Dewey-commissioned report in 1945 because publication "might jeopardize operations of a similar nature in the future."